

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/K:FMISCH:EY

APPROVED BY EA - OVARMSTRONG

EUR/NE:RWOODS

IO/UNP:GHELMAN (SUBS)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 213912

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, KS, KN, US, FI

SUBJECT: FINNISH INTEREST IN KOREA

REF: HELSINKI 1789

1. FINNISH MINISTER COUNSELOR ARTO TANNER CALLED ON EA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMSTRONG AUGUST 27 TO DISCUSS OVERALL SITUATION IN KOREA, PARTICULARLY RECENT DMZ INCIDENT AND THE KOREAN QUESTION AT THE 31ST UNGA. ARMSTRONG DESCRIBED INCIDENT AND EVENTS LEADING TO IT, INCLUDING PATTERN OF NORTH KOREAN HARRASSMENT ALONG THE DMZ AND WITHIN JOINT SECURITY AREA.

2. TANNER SAID FINNISH GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED NOTE FROM THE NORTH KOREANS KEYED TO THE AUGUST 5 GOVERNMENT STATEMENT, AND ASKED IF THE DMZ INCIDENT COULD BE RELATED TO THE STATEMENT AND TO THE NORTH KOREANS' DRIVES AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AND THE UN. ARMSTRONG SAID THAT
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BOTH SEEMED IN LINE WITH THE NORTH'S CONSISTENT TACTICS.

3. TURNING TO THE COMING UNGA, ARMSTRONG SAID THAT WE, ROK AND OUR SUPPORTERS SEE NOTHING TO BE GAINED FROM A REPETITION OF LAST YEAR'S CONTENTIOUS DEBATE ON KOREA.

ARMSTRONG SAID THAT WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY PREFER TO HAVE THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH RESUME THEIR DIALOGUE. IN ADDITION WE HAVE MADE A REASONABLE PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING OF THE PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED. WE FIND IT INCONSISTENT FOR THE NORTH KOREANS TO CLAIM THAT THE DANGER OF WAR IS RISING WHILE AT THE SAME TIME REFUSING TO BEGIN TALKS TO REDUCE TENSIONS ON THE PENINSULA.

4. ARMSTRONG SAID THAT WE STILL HAVE SOME HOPE THAT A UNGA DEBATE CAN BE AVOIDED, ALTHOUGH THE NORTH AND ITS FRIENDS SEEM DETERMINED UPON CONFRONTATION. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT WOULD LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE QUESTION AND CONSULT WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED STATES TO EXAMINE PROSPECTS FOR DEFERRAL. ARMSTRONG SAID THAT THE U.S. IS ENCOURAGED ALONG THIS LINE BY THE MORE THAN TWENTY RESERVATIONS ENTERED ON THE KOREAN LANGUAGE AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE. IN OUR VIEW, THE NORTH MIGHT BE WILLING TO RESUME THE DIALOGUE AND ACCEPT A NON-CONTENTIOUS SOLUTION IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ONCE THEY REALIZE THEY WILL NOT GET THE SUPPORT FOR THEIR POSITION WHICH THEY WANT AND THAT MODERATE STATES ARE INTERESTED IN DEFERRAL. WE THINK THAT DEFERRAL WOULD BE IN LINE WITH TRADITIONAL FINNISH POSITION ON KOREA.

5. TANNER SAID THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE INCREASED HOSTILITY OF THE NORTH KOREANS MIGHT INDUCE ADDITIONAL STATES TO SEEK MEANS FOR DEFERRAL, AND THAT HE IS CERTAIN THAT KOREA IS TOPIC OF NORDIC CONSULTATIONS, BUT DID NOT SPECULATE ON WHETHER FINLAND WOULD PARTICIPATE IN DEFERRAL EFFORT.

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